

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01920 231519Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 /031 W

-----240030Z 056833 /45

R 231427Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2337

INFO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1920

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP ELTN SY JO

SUBJ: PROPOSED WIDENING OF HEJAZ RAILWAY

REF: STATE 41526, ATHENS 1350, DAMASCUS 1429

1. SYRIAN DEPMIN TRANSPORT BURGHALI TOLD ECONOFF MARCH 21 THAT PROJECT OF WIDENING HEJAZ RAILWAY FROM DAMASCUS TO AMMAN AND AQABA IS PRESENTLY BEFORE SARG HIGHER ECONOMIC COUNCIL AND FAVORABLE DECISION IS EXPECTED IN A FEW WEEKS. HE DOES NOT EXPECT PRELIMINARY DESIGN STUDY TO BE TENDERED BEFORE 1978. BURGHALI DOUBTS CONSTRUCTION WORK WOULD BEGIN BEFORE 1980 AND THEN ONLY IF FINANCING CAN BE OBTAINED. NO CONTRACTS WILL BE LET IN 1977.

2. SYRIA SEES THREEFOLD LONG-TERM BENEFITS IN CONVERTING DAMASCUS-AMMAN-AQABA LINK TO STANDARD GAUGE, BUT HAS LITTLE INTEREST IN WIDENING ONLY DAMASCUS-AMMAN PORTION: (A) LINKING DAMASCUS WITH AQABA WILL PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY IN UTILIZATION OF JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN PORTS; (B) SYRIA SEES LARGE MARKETS FOR ITS PHOSPHATES AND WISHES TO LINK PHOSPHATE

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FIELDS WITH AQABA. HOWEVER, SARG WISHES TO COMPLETE LINK FROM ITS PHOSPHATE FIELDS THROUGH HOMS TO TARTOUS BEFORE FINISHING HOMS-DAMASCUS LINE (PRESENTLY DAMASCUS IS NOT LINKED BY RAIL TO NORTHERN AND CENTRAL SYRIA). THESE PROJECTS ARE UNDER WAY AND SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 1980. (C) THE HOMS-DAMASCUS-AMMAN-AQABA LINE WILL GREATLY BENEFIT THE TRANSIT TRADE AND THROUGH LINKS WITH THE TURKISH AND GREEK RAILWAY SYSTEMS

(THE LATTER THROUGH PROPOSED RAIL-FERRY CONNECTION EXPECTED IN THE EARLY 1980'S) WILL GIVE THROUGH RAIL CONNECTION WITH EUROPE. IF SAUDIS FOLLOW THROUGH ON RECENT INDICATION THAT THEY WANT TO REVIVE HEJAZ RAILWAY AS STANDARD GAUGE LINE THERE WOULD BE LARGE REVENUES FROM TRANSPORT OF SAUDI MINERAL DEPOSITS RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN NORTHERN HEJAZ. (BURGHALI DID NOT ELABORATE ON THIS ALLEGED SAUDI INTEREST).

3. EMBASSY SUBMITTED COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SYRIAN RAIL SYSTEM, INCLUDING HEJAZ RAILWAY, IN DAMASCUS A-10 (2/10/77).
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, RAILROADS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
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Film Number: D770100-0495
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
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ISecure: 1
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Litigation History:
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TAGS: BEXP, ELTN, SY, JO
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